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# MONTANA LETTER

AN 8 '76

PROCUREMENT SECTION  
CURRENT SERIAL RECORDS

December 18, 1975

## 1976 ACP

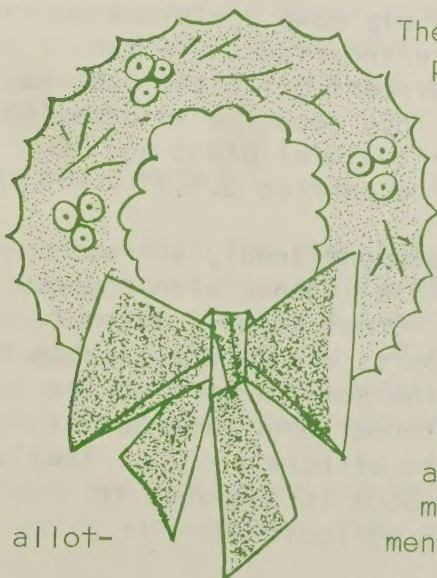
The 1976 ACP program has been funded at \$85 million for the allocations to states. Montana's allocation has been announced at \$2.3 million. The objective of the 1976 program is the same as last year. The allocation was determined by the Secretary of Agriculture according to the Conservation Needs of the states.

As in 1975, there will be long term agreements as well as annual agreements, and forestry incentives practices.

## 1976 FEED GRAIN ALLOTMENT

A 1976 national feed grain allotment of 89 million acres was announced by USDA on November 4. The 89 million acre allotment is the same as that for 1975.

Montana's feed grain allotment for 1976 is 1,571,235 acres, about an 800 acre increase over 1975.



allot-

The allotment represents the acreage that will produce the quantity of corn, sorghum & barley, USDA officials estimate will be needed to meet domestic and export demands. The allotment in no way

restricts the acreage that can be planted to feed grains by producers. The sole use of allotments is to provide a basis for making deficiency payments should the price of feed grains fall below target prices, or disaster payments should producers qualify.

## NEW CED TRAINEE

On October 26 we added a new trainee to our midst, Miss Vicki Scott. Sorry about that old fashioned title, but we're creatures of habit around here.



Vicki was raised in Great Falls, but fortunately her uncle had a ranch nearby. Fortunately, because Vicki is an animal lover - even going to such lengths

as having and training a horse for 4-H, and teaching riding at college.

She attended Colorado College for one year, and graduated from Montana State University in the spring of 1975 with a degree in Agricultural Production - in Animal Science. Her hobbies are cross country skiing and swimming, besides her horses. She also has a Dalmatian to keep her company.

Nice to have you aboard, Vicki!

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*If you want to get even with someone, why not start with someone who has helped you.*



## AG CENSUS SURPRISE

The Agricultural Census, which has run one to two years behind schedule the last couple of times it has been taken, is actually running ahead of schedule this time.

According to Dean Quirin, Special Assistant of the Census of Agriculture, initial state reports were expected out in January, but will be out in December. They now expect all state reports out by May, possibly June, and the county reports all wrapped up by April.

## EXCERPT FROM 'USDA'

The October "USDA" newsletter carried an article we felt you would be interested in reading:

"COULD WE HAVE PREDUCTED SOVIET GRAIN NEEDS? Had it not been for a streak of dry weather, the Soviet Union would now be boasting a near-record harvest of grains for 1975. Instead, they have been forced to enter the world market in a big way, with 1974-75 grain imports expected to surpass the 1971-73 record. A hefty share will come from the U.S.

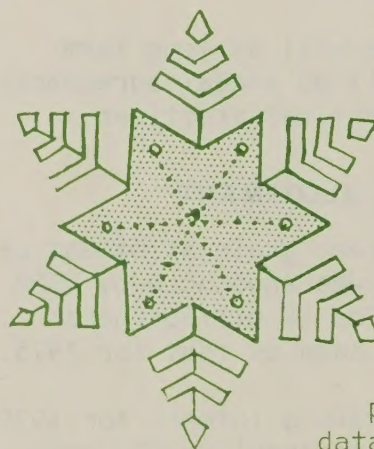
"Could the U.S. have foreseen the Russian's sizeable grain needs? USDA statisticians and economists say that they could only guess, based on weather and Soviet planting activities. While the U.S. agricultural data collection system is geared toward forecasting the size of our crop production so that farmers can plan crop ahead, getting forecasts of Soviet grain production is next to getting blood from a turnip.

"Soviet officials aren't much interested in forecasting crop output during the growing season. Their overriding concern is how to meet the production targets decreed by Moscow.

"As for the individual Soviet farmer, crop prospects in the rest of the country have little impact on his operation. The state tells him what and how much to sell, and fixes the price beforehand. Most of the decisions have already been made for him.

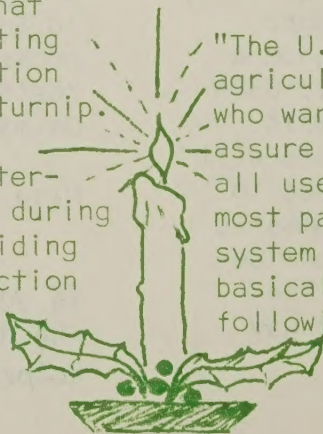
"But don't think that the Soviets are in the Dark Ages when it comes to gathering agricultural statistics. Far from it. Compared with the U.S. system, the Soviet set-up is more structured and complex. Also, a good part of the Russian data are more current than ours.

"One of the main differences between our system and theirs is who uses the figures. This gets back to the reason the Soviets don't see the need for making agricultural forecasts in the first place.



"In the U.S., primary users of data are the farmers themselves plus businessmen and others who rely on official statistics to help make decisions guiding their enterprises. In the U.S.S.R., government officials are the big clients. They need the information to develop agricultural plans and to see that they're carried out.

"The U.S. Government freely shares agricultural intelligence with anybody who wants it. Great care is taken to assure the reports are made available to all users at the same time. For the most part, information in the Soviet system flows to officials only. That's basically why USDA is hampered in following USSR agriculture.





"The contrasts between the two systems go deeper.

"Consider first that we have more farms to count - roughly 2.5 mil., most of them small, family operations. The Soviet Union has fewer than 50,000 large socialized farms.

"For our purposes the best way of gathering the most accurate data for the least amount of money is through the sampling technique, including questionnaires mailed to selected farms, personal interviews, & yield surveys. Participation by farmers is voluntary.

"The Soviets, on the other hand, do a complete enumeration of collective & state farms. Farms refusing to cooperate pay stiff penalties.

"Both countries collect basic data on crops and livestock - crop area, yield, production, livestock numbers, livestock products, stocks, & marketings. But in addition, the U.S. system emphasizes farmers' crop planting and livestock breeding intentions and forecasts of pre-harvest yields.

"The basic data which the Soviets release do benefit US analysts as they study Soviet agriculture. But as a leading producer and trader in farm products, the US needs a better reading of current crop prospects in the USSR to assess the outlook for world agriculture."

### GRAIN CHECKS

Remember that the poor harvest conditions this year are good conditions for causing heating & insect infestations in stored grain. Periodic checks on grain this winter might save the grain crop from destruction.

Check the grain for hot spots by probing with a metal rod. Insert the

rod and leave it for enough time for it to pick up heat. As you remove it, run it through your hand to feel any warm spots. Heat can be an indication of insects or of moist grain causing damage.

However you want to check, be sure & do it - and take immediate action on indication the grain is going out of condition.

### SO LONG, JOHN

John E. Collier, production adjustment program specialist in the SO, is retiring on January 19, 1976.



John came to the SO on a temporary appointment in May of 1954. He has had continuous service in the PA division since that time.

John and his wife, Virginia, plan to continue to live in Bozeman. He has no

definite future plans but we suspect there will be visits to grandchildren in North Dakota and Washington included.

Drop in and visit us from time to time, John. After that many years of service there will be an awful blank in the office.



*"To me, old age is always 15 years older than I am." - Bernard Baruch*



## COUNTY COMMITTEEMEN

This will be the last month of service for some of our county committeemen. We want to thank all committeemen for their help during the last year, but especially those who are completing their service with us. This has been a year of transition, with many new things to do. We appreciate the spirit of cooperation and the dedication of all you fine people toward making this agency more responsive to the needs of the producers. We look forward to a long & happy association with all of you, as committeemen, or as producers.

We would like to quote from a memo from Administrator Kenneth Frick regarding "Authority Requiring Responsibility":

"Now that the authority to determine the need & eligibility for Emergency Conservation Measures (ECM), Agricultural Conservation Program (ACP), & Emergency Livestock Feed (ELP) rests firmly in your hands, greater care than ever must be taken to insure these programs are administered in a responsible manner. When you have the responsibility, you automatically take on the burden of accountability. People have a right to question your actions.

"I'm questioned every day. Congress. My bosses in the USDA. Individuals in ASCS. Farmers & ranchers & others. People have a right to question me. Likewise, with your increased responsibility, you are accountable also.

"I urge each of you to make a special effort to see that all ASCS programs are administered according to the guidelines. For instance, in the administration of ACP, it is essential to make certain that the work would not have been done without ASCS

assistance. The regulations are very clear on this point.

"I'm confident that each of you will make a special effort to do this, and to see that our programs are administered in accordance with the intent of the legislation under which these programs are administered.

"ASCS has done a tremendous job through the years. In the future, I am certain that we'll continue to deserve this reputation, which you have been so instrumental in building."

## SPREADING IT THIN...AND QUICK...

Effective Oct. 1 the interest rate for price support commodity loans and farm storage facility loan will be 7.5 percent per annum.....MONTANA NOW RANKS fifth nationally in wheat production, third in barley output, & second only to North Dakota in the amount of these grains stored on farms.....SUGAR USE in 1975 may slip below 90 lbs a person, down from 97 pounds in 1974 and a recent high of 103 lbs. in 1972.



Leo S. Kolstad, SED  
Montana State ASCS Office  
P.O. Box 670  
Bozeman, MT 59715

*Merry Christmas  
and a  
Happy New Year*